

A behaviour management strategy HMYOI Warren Hill



Warren Hill's learning environment

We are a Young Offender Institution situated near Woodbridge in Suffolk and accommodate 192 young people.



Supported provider

YOI Warren Hill:

- Tony Dyer, Education Manager

Improvement partner

A4E:

- Lorna Poll, Regional Manager

The establishment has participated in the Support Programme since 2009 and in that period the LLN team has looked at the improvement of maths teaching and learning, the introduction of Functional Skills and active learning strategies. The team identified improved behaviour management as a need within their action plan in 2010/2011.

Behaviour as the key to learning

"Many of our learners need to develop the social and employability skills of team working, good communications and effective problem solving. Often they have neither completed Key Stage 4, nor achieved full Level 2 qualifications. To enable us all to concentrate on the range of skills development needed, we have to have a comprehensive behaviour management policy in place that everyone understands."

- Education Manager

External drivers

The Youth Justice Board, the organisation that oversees the youth justice system in England and Wales, states:

"It is essential that the establishments responsible for looking after children and young people in the secure estate have strategies for managing the behaviour of troubled and troublesome young people they care for".

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/youth-justice/custody/behaviour-management>

The Education Department at Warren Hill had a series of different strategies in place to structure the learning environment but a number of changes to the population, together with a new departmental structure and the recruitment of a tier of team leaders meant that a complete review of the learning contract was timely. The English and maths team were very conscious that a simple, well communicated and all-encompassing policy was needed that was fair and sustainable within the constraints of a closed environment.

Whole organisation approach

In preparation for the review of the learning contract, and to get gain a good understanding of the learning environment at Warren Hill, two staff members from A4E spent time in the establishment talking to staff and observing English and maths lessons.

The Department's senior management team met with improvement provider staff out of the institution to review the whole organisational approach to English and maths needs and behaviour management strategies. It was agreed that without an orderly atmosphere, effective teaching and learning cannot take place. It was also agreed that the role of tutors went beyond that of maintaining good order. It was part of their responsibility to assist the young people to have a clear understanding of society's expectations, helping them to appreciate the needs of other and develop their basic employability skills. Underpinning theories of preventative, supportive and corrective behaviour management were considered alongside the establishment's existing system of incentives and sanctions. We recognised the importance of personal, learning and thinking skills in developing acceptable behaviour and decided that a comprehensive Behaviour Management Policy should include:

- A learning contract, signed by new learners, that sets out what is expected of them in simple terms and identifies what they, as learners, can expect in return in terms of achievement and support
- More opportunities to record achievement and celebrate successes
- Classroom rules needed to be displayed in each classroom in a clear and imaginative way (tag clouds were suggested)
- English and maths tutors had to have a common understanding of the behaviour management strategy and the standards of expected behaviour. The team discussed learner behaviour in terms of respecting the environment and conduct within the Education Department

The Education Manager used this work to produce a draft policy document which was shared with the Prison Service and approved. Two training sessions were planned for foundation learning tutors, and these included a series of practical scenarios that would help staff share their experiences and support one another in standardising and dealing with challenging behaviour, as well as establishing a common understanding of rewards and incentives.

Success factors

At the start of the Support Programme, it was clear that there was no single, coherent strategy for behaviour management at Warren Hill and the whole organisational approach to meeting English and maths needs required refreshing. Addressing two such important and interlinked issues through the development and roll out of the revised strategy

underlined the importance of both. Involving a team of six staff, instrumental in developing the new policy and rolling out training to the wider team has ensured that the policy meets the Department's needs and are fully integrated into the daily routine of the establishment.

Feedback

"Creating an environment in which those who struggled at school can develop the skills they need to further their education or access work on release is vital. By working with LSIS and the Support Programme we have had the opportunity to reflect on our current practices and develop our functional skills provision so we can capture and reward effective social and employability skills development, while dealing fairly and consistently with inappropriate behaviours".

- Education Manager

Building on our success

As a result of the support we have had from A4E, we now have the revised strategy in place and an increased confidence in our approach. Our next steps are:

- To include the implementation of the policy on the agenda of each staff and foundation learning curriculum team meeting
- To evaluate the impact of the behaviour management strategy in the first year of its use, particularly the impact on retention and success rates
- To involve learners in these processes through The Learner Forum
- To share good practice across the prisons

Although the prison sector has particular needs and constraints, we have several tips which we believe are applicable to all environments:

- Hold an event to kick start the process and to ensure senior management commitment to a top down and pervasive approach to behaviour management and to meeting English and maths needs and celebrating achievement
- Include these topics on the agenda at regular meetings and share ideas and experiences
- Share good practice regionally, rather than just within individual institutions
- Incentives for learners and celebration of success develops pride in learning and encourages behaviour improvement